

BLACK SCIENCE

16

RICK REMENDER
MATTEO SCALERA
MORENO DINISIO



THE STORY SO FAR...

One by one Grant McKay has seen the Dimensionauts fall victim to his broken creation, the Pillar. Grant's dream of interdimensional travel and discovery proved to be a nightmare, as each dimension claimed another victim...

Security Chief Ward, left to die on a mudsodked battlefield when Kadir refused to come to his aid...

Sara, Grant's wife from another dimension, burned alive while sacrificing herself to save Grant's daughter Pia...

Chandra, Kadir's assistant, possessed by malevolent gaseous lifeforms bent on interstellar domination, disappeared into the void with a Pillar of her own...

The Shaman, a wizened warrior who sought to destroy the Pillar, which he saw as inherently evil, shot down by Rebecca, Grant's onetime lover and co-creator of the Pillar...

Now, Grant has decided to put an end to the trail of death, and to leave this plague-stricken world better than when his team found it.

As he rockets into the sky to disperse the cure, Kadir is faced with a ghost from his past... who has come to deliver him to the sword.

And around the broken Pillar huddle the remaining Dimensionauts, as it counts down to its final jump...

BLACK SCIENCE created by Rick Remender & Matteo Scalera



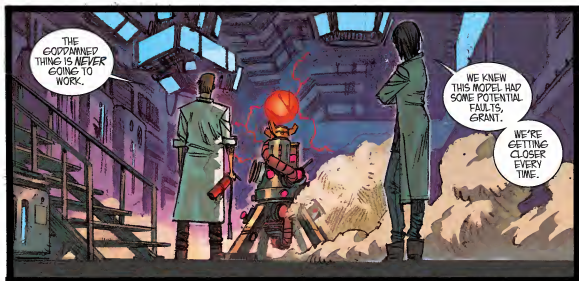
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"I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE."





THE
GODDAMNED
THING IS NEVER
GOING TO
WORK.

WE KNEW
THIS MODEL HAD
SOME POTENTIAL
FAULTS, GRANT.

WE'RE
GETTING
CLOSER
EVERY
TIME.



CLOSER
TO WHAT?!

THE HOMING BEACON IS
IMPOSSIBLY DELICATE
AND I DON'T KNOW HOW
TO GET ENOUGH COOLANT
INTO THE QUANTUM ENGINE
TO KEEP IT FROM
EXPLODING EVERY
SINGLE TIME IT
POWERS UP!

GRANT,
THIS IS—



ONE GIANT
FUCKING
WASTE OF
TIME.

THIS
WHOLE
THING.



THERE IS A POINT IN ALL
GREAT ENDEAVORS, A TEST
OF WILL THAT DEFINES
THE EFFORT.

WE KEEP GOING—
AND MAYBE WE SUCCEED—OR
WE QUIT AND CERTAINLY FAIL.

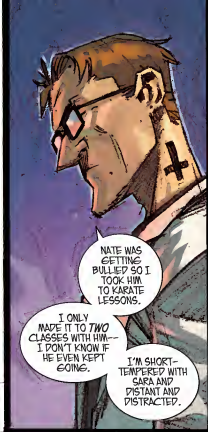


THERE'S
MORE TO
LIFE THAN
THIS.



MY
DAUGHTER
FIA.

HER SOFTBALL
TEAM IS APPARENTLY
IN SOME KIND OF A
CHAMPIONSHIP BUT I
COULDN'T TELL YOU
ANYTHING ABOUT IT
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T
BEEN THERE FOR
ANY OF HER GAMES.



NATE WAS
GETTING
BULLIED SO I
TOOK HIM
TO KARATE
LESSONS.

I ONLY
MADE IT TO TWO
CLASSES WITH HIM--
I DON'T KNOW IF
HE EVEN KEPT
GOING.

I'M SHORT-
TEMPERED WITH
SARA AND
DISTANT AND
DISTRACTED.



THEY
DESERVE
BETTER.

I CAN'T
GIVE ANYTHING
MORE TO THIS,
REBECCA.

I WON'T.



IF WE QUIT
NOW THEN THOSE
SACRIFICES AND
EIGHT YEARS OF
WORK WILL HAVE
BEEN DEDICATED
TO NOTHING.



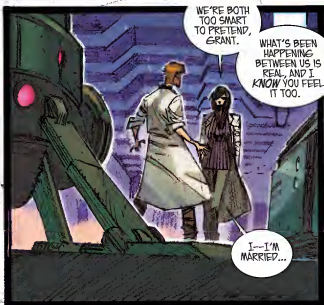
I DON'T
CARE
ANYMORE.

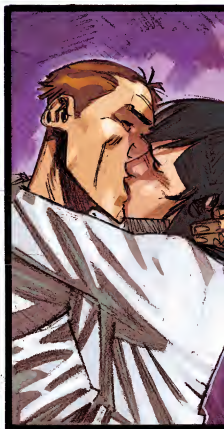
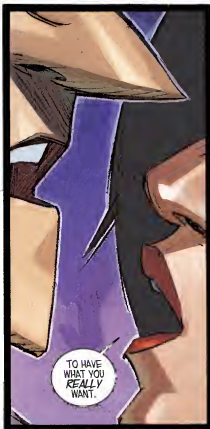
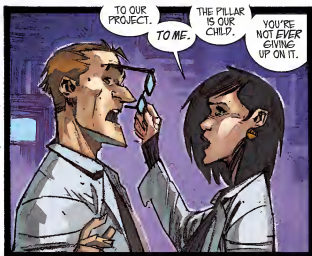
I WANT
MY LIFE
BACK.

I WANT TO
LISTEN TO MY
HEART AND DO
WHAT FEELS
RIGHT.



WHAT FEELS
MORE RIGHT
THAN THE TWO
OF US HERE--
TOGETHER?





BLARING WIND.

EYES PRY OPEN DRY--

---FROM BAD MEMORY
TO WORSE REALITY.

CRANKY ENGINE
GRUMBING
BEHIND ME--

---NOT AN ENGINE--

USER
DISENGAGED.

---A CANNON.

ROLL--

HEAT BURNS MY
SKIN THROUGH
THE SUIT--

---INCH CLOSER
AND I'M FUCKED.

GUT CALLS
THE CHOICE.

TURN AROUND
GET CLEAR OF
THE AIR TANK.

OR DIVE HEADLONG
TOWARDS THE GAUNTLET.

KROOSH

STUPID GUTS.



DEAFENING CANNONS.

AN OLD ECHO.

MOM STANDING OVER ME,
HER BOTTOM TEETH SHOOTING
THROUGH A SNARL.

"IT'S YOUR
FAULT, GRANT."

"YOU DESTROYED
OUR FAMILY."

REPEATED
FOR YEARS.

SELF-FULFILLING
PROPHECY OR APT
PREDICATION—

EITHER
WAY—



—SHE WAS RIGHT.

IT WAS MY FAULT.

FOR TELLING
DAD ABOUT
HER BETRAYAL.

SHE
BLAMED
ME.

SHAMED MY
HONESTY.

AND NEVER ONCE
FACED THE WRECKAGE
SHE'D CREATED.



I'M NOT HER.

I WON'T
BLAME
ANYONE.

THIS IS
MY MESS.

I'LL FACE IT.

HIT THE GAS—
HEAD ON—

SAVE THIS
DYING WORLD.

SAVE MY TEAM.

SAVE MY FAMILY.

AND IF I'M
LUCKY—

—IF THERE'S SOME
JUSTICE IN THIS
TOILET BOWL—

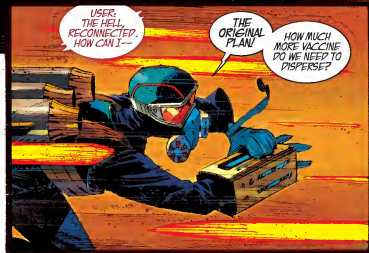
—SAVE WHAT'S
LEFT OF MYSELF.



USER,
THE HELL
RECONNECTED.
HOW CAN I

THE
ORIGINAL
PLAN!

HOW MUCH
MORE VACCINE
DO WE NEED TO
DISPERSE?



22% MORE
NEEDED.

BE ADVISED:
IT MUST BE
DISPERSED AT
AN ALTITUDE
OF



HIGH—
I GOT IT.

LET'S
GO!





I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
YOU THINK
I DID—

BWA!
ENOUGH
SQUIRMING—
WE BOTH
KNOW WHAT
YOU DID.



WHAT I DON'T
KNOW IS HOW YOU
SURVIVED THE
INQUISITIONS!

KNOOM



YOU
WANTED
THEM TO
DIE!



THIS PLAGUE SPREAD
BECAUSE OF YOUR
MANIPULATIONS—

FLOK



I DON'T
CARE WHO
YOU ARE—



I KNOW
WHAT YOU
ARE.

FWOOSH



YOU ARE A
MANIPULATOR.
A LIAR. A
CHARLATAN.

YOU ARE
A CANCER
INFECTING ALL
GOOD THINGS
AROUND YOU—



—AND IT IS
MY JOY TO LEVY
VENGEANCE
UPON YOU.

HE...

HE WAS
GOING TO
DESTROY THE
PILLAR...

HE WAS
GOING TO
STRAND US
HERE—

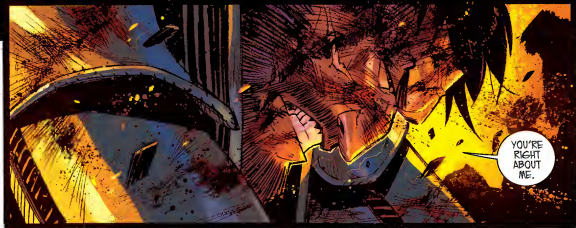
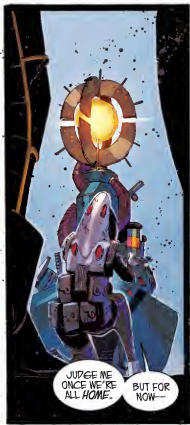
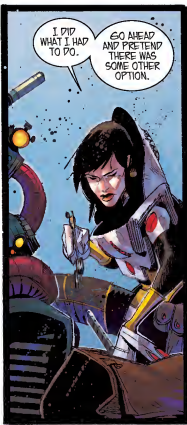
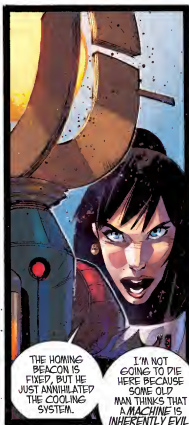


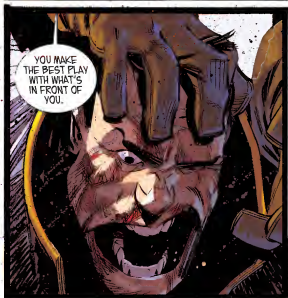
I DIDN'T
HAVE ANY
OTHER
OPTION!

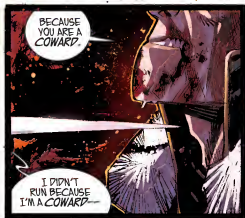
PUT THE
GUN DOWN,
REBECCA.



TAKE
IT.









"NO ONE ONLY GETS
YOU KILLED."

HE WAS MY FRIEND...
HE WAS ONLY DOING
WHAT HE THOUGHT
WAS RIGHT...

HE WAS
GOING
CRAZY,
NATE.

WAS
GOING
TO STRAND
US HERE.



SO WE JUST
MURDER ANYONE
WHO GETS IN
OUR WAY?

NO, OF
COURSE
NOT.

JUST... DAD'S
COMING BACK,
WE'LL BE HOME
SOON.

BACK WITH
MOM, AND WE'LL
FORGET ABOUT
ALL OF THIS.



WHY DID HE
LEAVE US HERE
WITH HIS ROTTEN
GIRLFRIEND?

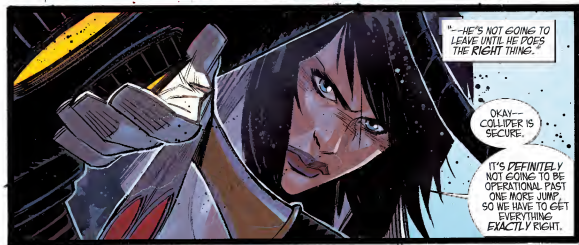


EX-
GIRLFRIEND.

YOU HEARD HIM—
HE WANTS OUR
FAMILY BACK
TOGETHER.

BUT HE'S
DOING WHAT
HE THINKS
IS RIGHT.

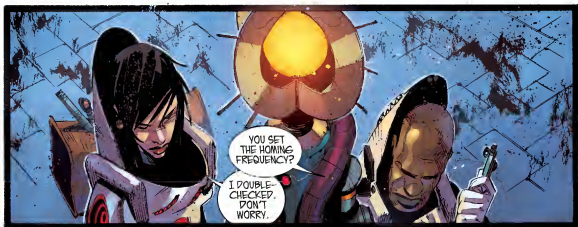
UNLIKE
REBECCA
OR KADIR—

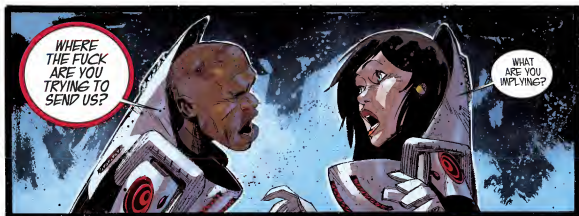


"—HE'S NOT GOING TO
LEAVE UNTIL HE DOES
THE RIGHT THING."

OKAY—
COLLIDER IS
SECURE.

IT'S DEFINITELY
NOT GOING TO BE
OPERATIONAL PAST
ONE MORE JUMP
SO WE HAVE TO GET
EVERYTHING
EXACTLY RIGHT.









YOU
LOVE YOUR
BROTHER,
DON'T YOU,
PIA?



YOU'D DO
ANYTHING
TO KEEP HIM
SAFE.

WOULDN'T
YOU?



PLEASE...

I HAD A
BROTHER, AND
I COULDN'T
KEEP HIM
SAFE.

AND SO
WE'RE GOING
TO A PLACE
WHERE I DID—



—WE'RE
GOING TO A
WORLD WHERE
MY BROTHER
IS STILL
ALIVE.

AND
NO ONE
IS GOING
TO GET IN
MY WAY.



NO
ONE...

IS...



DROP THE
GUN OR YOU'LL
NEVER SEE
ANYONE EVER
AGAIN.



WE'RE NOT GOING
TO VISIT YOUR
DEAD FUCKING
BROTHER.

WE'RE
GOING
HOME.



YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND—



I'M
PRETTY
SURE I
DO.

PUT IT
DOWN.

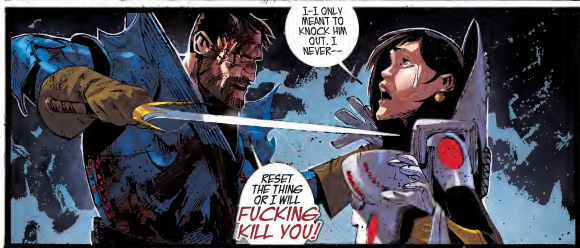
SLOWLY.

SHAWN!

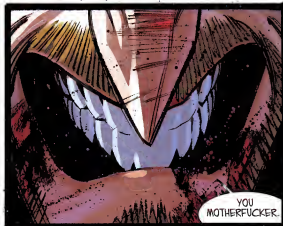
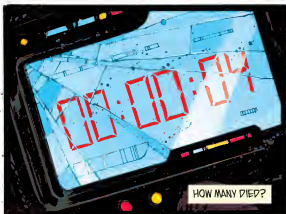
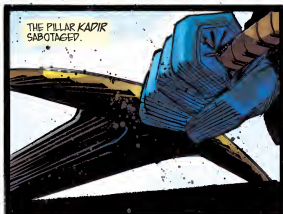


H—HE'S NOT
BREATHING!

HELP!











DID YOU HEAR THAT?

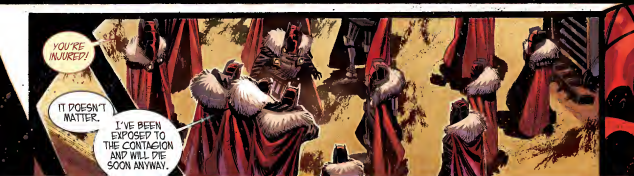
LOUD AS THUNDER.

WE MUST GO IN--!



THERE IS NOTHING WITHIN.

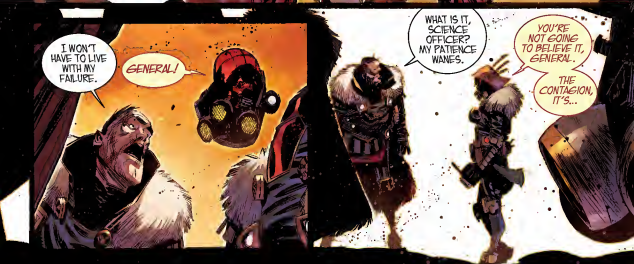
THE HERETICS HAVE FLED.



YOU'RE INJURED!

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

I'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO THE CONTAGION AND WILL DIE SOON ANYWAY.



I WON'T HAVE TO LIVE WITH MY FAILURE.

GENERAL!

WHAT IS IT, SCIENCE OFFICER? MY PATIENCE WANES.

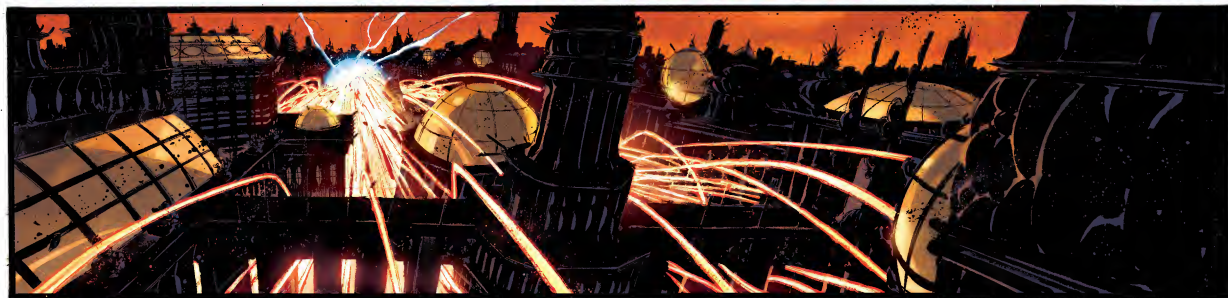
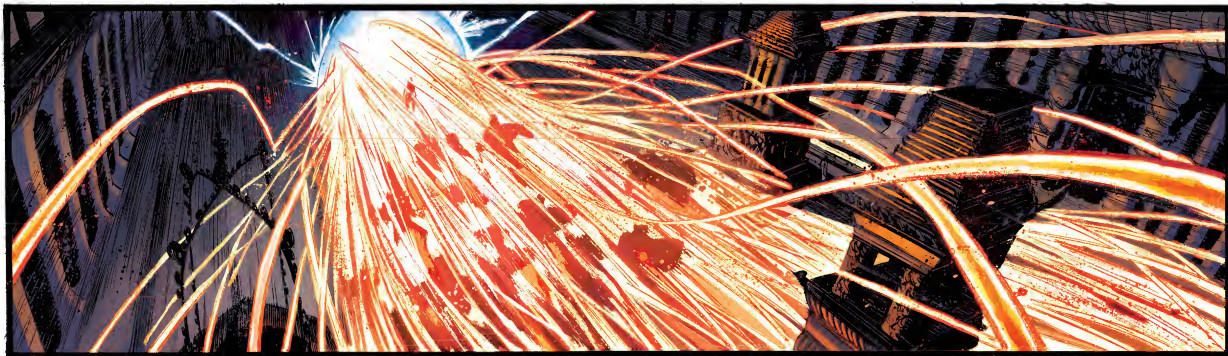
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE IT, GENERAL.

THE CONTAGION, IT'S...



REEEEEEEE





B L A C K

RICK REMENDER
WRITER

MATTEO SCALERA
ARTIST

S H I L L

MORENO DINISIO
COLORS

RUS WOOTON
LETTERING

SEBASTIAN GIRNER
EDITOR

FROM PILLAR TO POST

RR - Oh, sentient gas ghosts, we knew you'd show back up eventually.

And with that, the end of the first major story for our little book. The cracked Pillar didn't seem entirely fixed when it was about to jump. That's probably going to lead to some trouble...

Let's get to some letters!

Hey Rick!

I've been reading **BLACK SCIENCE** since issue 1 when a blog I like suggested it and I just really wanted to tell you that it has become one of my favorite series of all time along with Sandman and Batman.

Just finished issue 15 and was upset about the Shaman being killed, but I'm sure it's important to the story. Characters seem to die a lot in this book so here is my question for you: do you ever kill off characters for the sake of killing them off to shock the readers? Or is it always well planned out with the story in mind?

I'm not complaining at all and I love the book I'm just curious about your thought process here!

Thanks,
Jackson Hill

RR - A character death has to reveal elements of other characters or play some pivotal role in the overall plot. Issue by issue the Shaman had become less and less comfortable, and the more damage he could see the Pillar had done, the less willing he was to allow it to continue to spread what he believed to be evil. We've seen Rebecca kill before and this was an escalation of her secret obsession, so as

she got closer to her ultimate goal of seeing her brother again no one was going to stop her. So the ending of issue 15 accomplished a number of things. I try not to do anything simply for shock value. We have an outline worked out far in advance and everything that happens feeds into something else or pays out later on.

Oh man, where do I even begin?! **BLACK SCIENCE** is what got me back into comics, plain and simple. As a kid I loved comics but then everything started getting very dark, gritty and far too depressing for me to enjoy anymore, but then I found **BLACK SCIENCE** and I saw my love of this art form reignite. What I love about it is how contemporary it is. We have the blood, sex, cursing and dynamic storytelling of this modern era but then **BLACK SCIENCE** also has awesome (and outrageous, in the best way possible) stuff like a robot-powersuit wearing Native American medicine man throwing a flaming energy power punch at an Inter-dimensional traveling machine while saying a badass ancient Native American proverb one liner as well. That's the good stuff, man! That's what it's all about! I've always felt comics need that bit of cartoonishness, and **BLACK SCIENCE** nailed it.

My question to you is --

When is Krolar gonna get a piece of the action?? I'm hoping he winds up being his dimensions version of Nate or something crazy like that- it's always the quiet ones ya' know?

I'd also just like to say I really enjoy the pulpy-Sci-Fi feel of **BLACK SCIENCE** as well as the sci-fi dealing with parallel dimen-

sions which are a very cool yet underused sub-genre!!

Also, I have to say the art! The art! Oh my God the art! One thing man -- more centerfolds. Please. This is the best art I've seen in a comic book period. Past or present.

From a fan,
Wes N

RR - If you enjoy **BLACK SCIENCE** you should go purchase *Fear Agent* and *Low*, my other two science fiction books. All three are sort of in the same family of books. As for Krolar, he's here for a reason. When we get to see his presence bear fruit is another question, but there is big fun stuff coming! The jump we saw on this issue was no normal jump. The Pillar was broken and strange days are coming.

I know you've graced this topic a few times, but I want to clarify this once and for all.

How possible would it be for the dimensionauts we know to build a new Pillar? We've seen other versions with portable Pillars that seem to function consistently and much better than the erratic jumping of **BLACK SCIENCE**'s main plot driver does. Is this to suggest the other dimensions have better technology or are better scientists/engineers than our protagonists?

If Grant was stuck on a dimension for long enough, could he build a new one? If he started working on one could he bring it with him to continue working as they jump around the onion? What does the Pillar bring? Obviously it's not just humans since all their gear and supplies and things keep jumping with them, does that mean that dirt or sediment from the ground

gets transported with them?

My final and most nagging of inquiries is will we ever see the *Low* crossover teased, however, many months ago? I'm very keen to see some Image crossovers. I know it's part of what makes Image great that every creator isn't confined by having to fit into a bigger picture, but while I'm starving for new *Low* content I'd love to see even a hint at an expanded universe.

Rook T.
Williamson, NY,

RR - All really good questions, Rook. And I bet you'll see some answers to them in coming issues.

I'm constantly struggling with myself in regards to the crossovers. Part of me thinks it hurts the integrity of the series but the other part of me thinks it would be incredibly fun. We'll see as things progress if a story comes to mind that demands a crossover. But I like to think of these books as their own HBO style series, and can you imagine how disruptive it would be to the story if the *Sopranos* popped up in an episode of *True Detective*? But it would also be pretty great...

Hey Rick,

Obviously I love your comic. I wouldn't be writing to you after getting 14 issues deep into the series if I didn't, so I won't bore you with some inspirational story of how BLACK SCIENCE changed my life and made all my dreams come true. (It did.) Anyways, last time I logged onto the old FaceSpace, I was sad to see there wasn't any BLACK SCIENCE page that I could like and proudly display my love for the series for

all the interwebs to see. You or one of your henchmen should make a BLACK SCIENCE Facebook page, it'd be a great way for us loyal fanslaves to get news, discuss and spread awareness of your work. I'd like it. And on some layer of the Onion, you know that there's a Jesus with a Facebook account who would like it too.

Eric P.

RR - We've been so busy making the comic books, and making sure they are the best we can produce, we haven't had any time to dedicate to merchandise. But that is changing as we are in talks right now to figure out how to make some sculptures, toys, and T-shirts. Hopefully we'll have news soon. Keep checking here.

Dear Mr. Remender

I just wanted to congratulate you on BLACK SCIENCE and the art of a well-made deception. I was sure that I was reading a science fiction action book full of stimulating pseudo-science and exciting levels of perfectly delivered violence... but now, I realize that I've been deceived, and the story is about being heroes, understanding humanity, family and love.

What a beautiful deception you created I'm so glad I fell for it... I'll go call my parents.

Thanks

Carlos Lau

RR - it's really nice to hear. Taking the slow road to build a character arc in comic books can sometimes mean it takes 13 or 14 issues before you reach the payout. And in Grant's case we had to show the ugliness before they could earn the beauty. Tell

your parents I said hi.

RR,

Thank you, thank you, thank you! BLACK SCIENCE is one of the best comics I've ever read. Reminds me of a crazy night in Amsterdam... Totally badass! I was wondering if you guys were thinking about merchandising. I would love a logo tee!! Maybe a big poster? Hurry up and take my money!

Foaming at the Mouth,
Brandon K. Gartin

RR - Merchandise is coming for sure. Thanks for writing in and for all the encouragement. Our monthly readers help us keep the book alive and we love you, blemishes and all.

Let's hear it for Matteo, Moreno, Rus, and Sebastian. I have failed to write scripts that come in at the appropriate page count this entire series. This issue almost went 30 pages long. That's a whole lot of extra work that these guys did because they believe that you deserve the best we can produce. But it adds up to almost 2 weeks of extra work from these guys and I personally am so grateful for their willingness to put in those hours so that we could tell the final chapter of this first story in grand style.

See you all in a couple of months after we catch up for issue 17. We're including the ink cover art for the issue to give you a taste of what's to come. I can't wait.

Rick



TRANSMISSIONS FROM A BASEMENT

It's an unseasonably cold June morning in Los Angeles as I drink my third cup of coffee and prepare for the self-inflicted anxiety attack. The caffeinated monkey on my back is another symptom of working too much, for too many years. My rocket fuel of choice propels me headlong into a frenzy of typing up fantasy and adventure and chicanery before dropping me down into the sad alleyways of the inevitable crash, low productivity, and more boiling beige.

Cutting back on my journey to brown town is next on a long list of things that need to happen for my sanity, but, and most importantly, cutting back on the reason that sweet brown horse is needed to pull me through the mud each day; too much work and not enough time with my family as we go through some health issues. Leading me to today's news.

After eight years with the company, I've decided to take a break from my work at Marvel Comics. I feel it an urgent necessity to focus on my family and my creator-owned endeavors.

Marvel enabled me to provide for my family as it grew, as my two children appeared into the world, and for that I am indebted and eternally grateful. They offered me their biggest flagship titles, they paid me well, and allowed me to sleep knowing my family could afford a doctor visit should one be needed, and this was not the case for most of my adult life.

Most of my life was spent in self-imposed abject poverty, quitting one lucrative job after another, to produce my own creator-owned comics in a market that didn't seem to want such things. But that has changed. People want a wide variety of comics now.

So, with your support, I'm going to chase that dream down and eat his sweet, sweet brains.

When I was 25, against the advice of everyone in my life, I left my first profitable job, then in animation, to do creator-owned comics. I wrote myself a letter to convince myself that, *"the unknown road holds better treasure, and even if it doesn't, you have to be true to yourself, to live independent or die and see what you can do on your own."* I reread that letter a few weeks ago and it helped soothe my fears. If I'd stayed in that job, or any of the in-house jobs I've left since it, I'd have never created the things that make me most fulfilled in my career.

So, for the next year, I'm only going to do work that the artists and I own. Putting my ass on the line along with my partners, and try for the dream one more time. To get back to doing what feeds my soul. To be around for my family during some trying times and spend my work hours making comics with the people I want to, the exact way we want to make them, and owning and controlling the fruits of our labor.

I've dedicated my life to making comics. I love it. I'm not sure I'll ever be able to stop doing it. You fine people make that possible by investing in the characters and stories we create. It sounds flat and insincere for some reason, but it's not.

Thank you for caring about these stories so I can keep collaborating with these amazing people to cook them up.

Here's to a year of creator-owned comics,
Rick

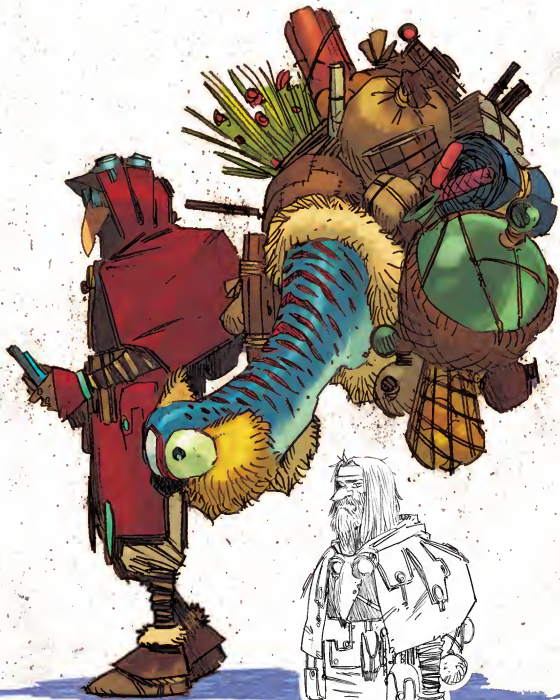


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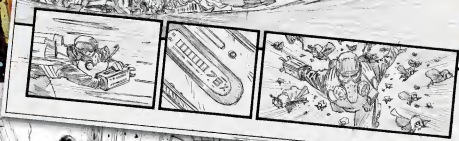
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